

RemarksAmendments to the Claims

The claims have been amended, as indicated above. The amendments to the indicated claims has been presented in accordance with the proposed revisions to 37 C.F.R. §1.121 as set forth in 1267 OG 106 (25 February 2003). No new matter has been introduced through the amending of the claims.

Claim Objections

Claims 12-14 are objected to. Claim 12-14 have been amended, as suggested by the Examiner. Therefore, the Applicants request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the objection.

Rejection of Claims under 35 U.S.C § 112

Claims 27 and 28 are rejected under 35 U.S.C § 112, first paragraph. Claims 27 and 28 have been amended to the single means issue. Therefore, the Applicants request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the objection.

Rejection of Claims under 35 U.S.C § 102

Claim 27 is rejected under 35 U.S.C §102 (b) as being unpatentable over Helterline et al. The Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection. Claim 28 has been added to claim 27, as suggested by the Examiner. Therefore, the Applicants request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejection.

Claims 11, 15, 27, 30, and 32 are rejected under 35 U.S.C §102 (b) as being unpatentable over Barbehenn et al. The Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection. Claim 12 has been added to claim 11, as suggested by the Examiner. Due to the fact that dependent claim 15 is dependent upon independent claim 11, the Applicants contend that this dependent claim is also allowable over the art of record. As discussed above, Claim 28 has been added to claim 27, as suggested by the Examiner. Also, due to the fact that dependent claims 30 and 32 are dependent upon independent claim 27,

the Applicants contend that these dependent claims are also allowable over the art of record. Therefore, the Applicants request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejection.

The Applicants acknowledge that allowance of claims 1-9 and 17-25.

The Applicants also acknowledge the objection of Claims 12-14, 28, 29, and 31 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim.

The Applicants have reviewed the art of record cited in the Office Action, but not applied in the rejection. However, the Applicants contend that this unapplied art does not anticipate and/or render obvious the claimed subject matter of the present invention.

In view of the above, it is respectfully submitted that this case is in condition for allowance and now may be passed to issue forth with. A holding to this effect is respectfully requested. If, in the opinion of the Examiner, a telephonic conference would expedite the examination of this patent application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney during normal Pacific Time Zone business hours.

Respectfully submitted,
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